2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

621 making the oblation, pours the beer or sprinkles the flour at the
613 root (*lipata*) of a shrine-tree. As would be consistent with this
769 way of looking at the lineage, genealogically-distant ancestors are said to be 'below' (*pasi*), so that if a Yao wishes to say that a certain person was a matrilineal ancestor many generations back, he would say that he was 'very much below'.

The Concept of 'The Mother'

613 The matrilineal descendants of the founder look upon them-
562 selves as having been fed from the same breast and may express this by saying 'we are of one breast'.[1] Deep sentiment is
843 attached to the idea of the mother among the Yao. There is, for example, a sharp distinction drawn between those women who have had children and those who have not. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, she is given instruction in child welfare when she undergoes a special ceremony (*litiwo*). This is a ceremony which is publicly announced and attended by most of her matrilineal and other kinswomen and acquaintances. No woman may attend this ceremony if she has not herself had a baby. Thus her change in status in the community is clearly shown by the public recognition of her condition, and the fact that she is initiated into secrets which are shared by other mothers only. Her position in the lineage is much enhanced when she becomes a mother. It is the most important step towards becoming a village founder herself.

562 The concept of 'the mother', in general, also appears in the
601 boys' initiation ceremonies. Certain phases of ceremonies may
881 be conducted only with the help of the women. They have to clap the rhythm to which the 'tailmen'[2] do their dances. Here all women are classified as 'mothers' and without their co-operation the ceremonies could not be conducted. During the same ceremonies three women appear with baskets of food on their heads. The tailmen remove the baskets and sacralize the

[1] *Tuli peñele pamo.* The word *mlango*, a doorway, is also commonly used. The idea in essence is exactly the same. It is the concept of the children who come to settle around a woman's hut door. It is used as *ñandu pamlango pao*, the people of his lineage section.

[2] *The m'mchira.* These are the functionaries in the initiation ceremonies. They carry medicated zebra tails during these ceremonies, and this gives them their names. See especially Stannus, 'The Wayao of Nyasaland', 229 *ff.*

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

contents. Here once again the women, though they may have no boys in the initiation ceremony, are called 'the mothers'. The ritual co-operation of the mothers in the initiation ceremonies is paralleled by that of mothers and sons in political affairs: here sons are in charge of the villages, while their mothers and sisters form the nucleus of the localized kinship group, which in turn is the core of the village.

The ritual importance of the mother is nowhere more clearly seen than in the curse. The Yao believe that a mother may curse her child if he or she is disobedient or otherwise beyond control. Not many mothers do curse their children; the threat to curse seems to be more often used. Informants have told me of some mothers who have cursed their children, and the procedure and the wording of the curse have always been very similar. It is usually not applied to young children who could be punished by other means, but to adults and particularly adolescents. Usually the mother lifts her breast and points the nipple upwards saying, 'If you have never sucked from this breast nothing dreadful will happen to you.' The consequences of this are greatly feared. Where I have been told of curses, each time the child has either died suddenly shortly after the curse, or at least it has gone mad. The curse is vaguely supposed to operate through the ancestor spirits, but I could get no clear statement on how this happens.[1] Whatever the cause, however, the symbolic action of lifting the breast and the dire effects which are supposed to follow from this, indicate the importance of the mother in the lineage.

The Yao attach this sentiment, in general, not only to the mother, but also to all senior matrilineal female relatives. In general speech all female members of the matrilineage in ascending generations are 'mothers', and all members in the descending generations are 'children'. This fundamental relation of mother and child extends throughout the lineage. The Yao term *acinangolo*, used for the senior female members of the matrilineage, embodies this idea of 'the mothers'. More specifically, as far as men are concerned, the matrilineage is classified into

[1] Further evidence that the ancestor spirits are involved in the curse may be that madness is called *masoko*—spirits—and that it may be said of a madman that the spirits are beating him (*gakumputa masoko*). A curse may be revoked by blowing water out of the mouth, an act which is also vaguely connected with the ancestor spirits.

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'sisters' and 'mothers' because alternate generations are merged in kinship terminology and in behaviour. A man's sister's daughter, for example, is called 'mother', and her daughter (his granddaughter) in turn becomes 'sister'. A woman calls her male matrilineal descendants 'children' (*mwanangu*), or 'grandchildren' (*yisikulu*); her matrilineal male progenitors 'mother's brother' (*akwelume*), or 'brother' (*alumbwangu*).[1] By extension, therefore, another way of expressing common matrilineal descent is to say that two people are the children of one person, *wanakajumo*, even though that person may be their great-grandmother. A term which is almost synonymous with this is *mucitumbu cimo*, 'in one womb', used as 'we were conceived in one womb', though once again the reference may be to a common grandmother. But the inclusiveness of these terms varies in different contexts. Any may refer to the matrilineage of maximal span within the village, or to a section of the matrilineage seen as a segmented organization of parts. It is only by reference to the particular ancestress that the range of the term may be determined.

The Unity of the Matrilineage

A person identifies himself most closely with the members of his matrilineage from whom he expects most help and whom he, in turn, is expected to help. If he is called upon to pay a heavy fine it will be the members of his own matrilineage who will club together to find sufficient money. They, more than others, support him in his quarrels. They come to his aid when he is ill or injured, by consulting the diviner and trying to find the sorcerer who is causing his illness, and by finding medicines which will bring him back to good health. They send him money if he has left the country and needs it to return. The goods he brings home from the labour centres will be shared mostly among his matrilineal relatives. They will find the food to be used at his funeral and also see that his burial is properly carried out. He owes these duties in turn to them. His property will stay almost entirely within the matrilineage after his death.

Relationship, unless qualified, is looked upon as being entirely matrilineal. This is well illustrated by the beliefs about the

[1] She more commonly addresses them as *acimweni*. See p. 147.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Table XXV sets out the disposition of the adult survivors of this matrilineage. 613 621

TABLE XXV

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT SURVIVORS: ALI KASUNKA VILLAGE

Relationship to Founder	In Village	Married out	Labour Migrants	Total
D	—	—	—	—
S	—	—	—	—
DD	3	—	1	4
DS	1	—	—	1
DDD	4	1	1	6
DDS	1	4	2	7
Females	7	1	2	10
Males	2	4	2	8

In this hamlet Ali Kasunka is both village headman and the senior male member of the matrilineage. He brought the village into Chiwalo's area and he had the responsibility for the welfare of its members. He has to arbitrate in the disputes that arise within the village and he must at least appear at arbitrations where the members of his village have come into conflict with outsiders. 613 621 622

THE CONFLICT OF MALE AUTHORITY AND UXORILOCALITY

Although descent is matrilineal, authority still rests with the men. The senior man by generation and age is the leader of the matrilineage. It is true that there are a number of small hamlets under women. Biti Nkula village is one, Biti Cimeta is another. But even for these villages there is usually a man who can be called in to handle the affairs of the village. He may be a classificatory brother of the village headwoman, or he may be her own son if he is old enough. For example, in Biti Nkula's village, it is her own son Adam who goes to the divinations and finds the necessary medicine when people fall ill. He also attends the court cases involving a member of the village. Adam is married to a woman in Ndiwagani's village about three-quarters of a mile away from his home and he is therefore easily 562 591 613

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

562 591 613 available when needed. When he became a labour migrant in 1945, his younger uterine brother Lipepeje took over the responsibilities. He is married in Ali Kasunka's village, which is about a mile from Biti Nkula's. In Biti Cimeta's village the minor disputes are settled by the headwoman herself. Her younger sister's son is married in a village ten miles away, and he would take over the duties if he could. He is married to his sister's husband's sister, and his sister's husband has threatened if he should try to take his wife home he will in turn take his wife to his home. Rather than stand the loss of a member from his matrilineal village he prefers to remain married uxorilocally. When more serious disputes occur he comes to Biti Cimeta's to settle them.

The principle of uxorilocal marriage is thus in conflict with the principle of male leadership of the lineage. If a man is living too far away he cannot attend to his numerous duties. The conflict can be solved in one of three ways. The first is that the man may marry in a village which is close at hand, and most marriages do take place between people who live near each other.[1] Second, he may marry a cross-cousin who is living in the village, albeit in another section of it. He need not then move out. Third, he may bring his wife into his village. The last two alternatives are from his point of view the best. He is then living with his matrilineal relatives, and among the group in which he has clearly defined rights and unequivocal status. But his wife's brothers will resist his attempts to take his wife from her village, especially if she is still capable of bearing children. He has to persuade her brothers to let her go with him and if they refuse, or if the woman herself refuses to go, he is helpless. Is he wishes to live virilocally now his only course is to divorce the woman and marry a woman who will live virilocally with him. If he does bring his wife to his village she is kept there by only loose ties of marriage, and on the slightest pretext her male relatives will take her back to her village or she herself will run away home.

562 591 613 The larger the group of relatives to be looked after, the more urgent is the need for the senior matrilineal male to live with his lineage. All the villages headed by females are small. Table

[1] 75 per cent of marriages are contracted by people who live within 10 miles of each other. See *Marriage among the Machinga Yao.* 621

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

XXVI sets out the position of a casual sample of 36 villages in Chiwalo and Nyambi areas. Among the 23 villages which had

TABLE XXVI

SIZE OF VILLAGES UNDER HEADWOMEN AND HEADMEN

Type of Village	Under 10 Huts	Over 10 Huts	Total
No matrilineage male resident .	13	2	15
Matrilineage male resident . .	10	11	21
Total	23	13	36

less than 10 huts each, 13 or 56·6 per cent had no male matrilineage members living in them. Among the 13 villages which had more than 10 huts, only two or 15·4 per cent had no matrilineage male members living in them.[1] The largest village in which there was no matrilineal male had only 11 huts. When the size of the village increases, the senior male matrilineage member tends to move in to live with his wards.

THE SORORITY-GROUP (*mbumba*)

But as the village grows and the duties of a senior matrilineage male become more onerous, a form of organization appears within the lineage which lessens his burden. This takes the form of the differentiation of sibling groups, and is part of the normal process of segmentation which is inherent in any lineage system. Consistent with the Yao idea that men should take care of the affairs of the lineage, sisters look to their eldest brother when they are in trouble. This group of sisters in the care of their brother is called *mbumba*. In the plural *acambumba* the word refers to women in general, but in the singular it refers to a particular group of women in the way I have explained. The word is always used in the sense of 'so-and-so's *mbumba*', as *mbumba ja CeMayele*. The central concept here is the brother-sister link and I have accordingly translated the word *mbumba* as sorority-group.

The man who is in charge of the women, usually their eldest

[1] Diff. of per cent = 41·1 ; S.E. of diff. = 17·1 ; C.R. = 2·4 ; p = 0·0164.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

The close link of brother and sister is also reflected in the kinship terminology. The common term used by both men and women to address sisters is *cemwali* and it is also applied to all women out of respect. But the term which is used descriptively and sometimes in address, cross-sexually, is *alumbwangu* (my sibling-of-opposite sex). It is self-reciprocal and thereby expresses the special relationship between the man and his sisters. Two sisters address each other in everyday conversation as *cemwali*. When it is necessary to be more specific an elder addresses the younger as *akuluwanga*. These are also descriptive terms. A man addresses his younger brothers as *apwanga* while they address him as *acimweni*. Women also address their elder or younger brothers as *acimweni*. This word is widely used as an honorific title but it is especially used for people who are in authority. The chief, for example, may be referred to as the *mcimweni*, and men frequently call their mother's brothers and other senior matrilineal male relatives by this term. An elder brother has the same duties towards his younger brothers as to his sisters, so that use of the term of address *acimweni* here indicates his position of authority over them.

From the point of view of a warden, his sorority-group is essentially made up of his sisters. We have seen that he is responsible for his younger brothers in exactly the same way as he is for his sisters, though technically they are not his sorority-group. He also has control over his sister's children so that ideally a warden sees his sorority-group as his sisters and their daughters and their daughter's daughters and so on. But a man's sister's daughters will probably have as their warden their own brother who stands in the same relationship to them as their mother's brother stands to their mother. The matrilineage is therefore organized internally in a system of inclusive sorority-groups extending from the eldest surviving member down to the youngest. However, a component sorority-group of a matrilineage does not begin to appear as a corporate group until the man who is to be its leader is old enough to take charge of the affairs of the women under him. Naturally, the age at which this happens is largely a matter of circumstance. Theoretically a man may not take charge until he has been initiated. But Yao boys nowadays are usually initiated at about 8 to 10 years of age. Obviously a child of this age cannot take over the affairs of his adult sisters, so that his mother's brother looks after

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613 them until he grows up. It is only when the boy becomes
562 adolescent that he begins to take an active part in these affairs.
593 This may begin in a small way. He may, for example, accompany
604 his mother's brother when he goes to consult a diviner. Or he

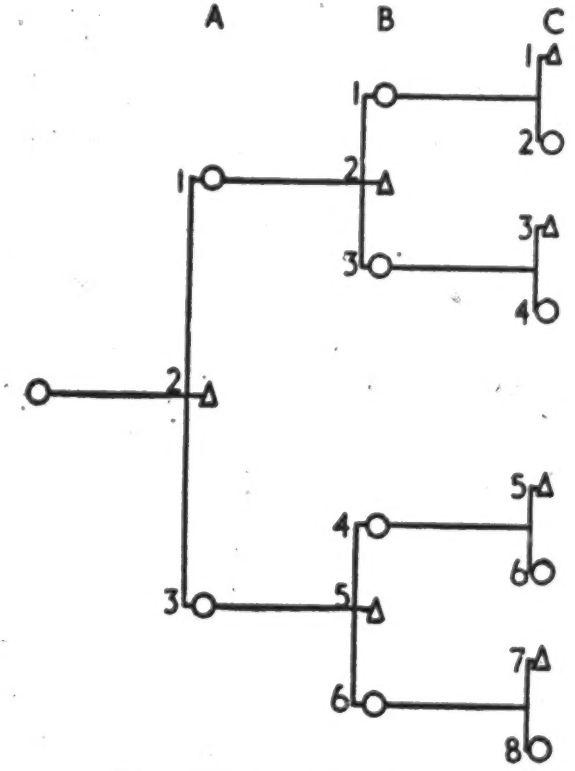

DIAGRAM 3. THE SORORITY-GROUP.

A2 sees his sorority-group as being composed of A1 and A3 and by extension *their* children.

B2 sees his sorority-group as B1 and B3 and by extension *their* children.
B5 sees his sorority-group as B4 and B6 and by extension *their* children.

may be given the charge of the conjugal affairs of one of his newly-married sisters. Gradually he assumes more and more responsibility. His mother's brother on the other hand falls more and more into the background and becomes rather a consultant than an active participant.

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It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of the sorority-group in everyday life. There is hardly a social situation in which the relationships of a man to his dependent female matrilineal kin are not involved. Probably marriage is the most frequent context in which his duties to and responsibilities for his sorority-group emerge. When a man wishes to marry a woman, he must get the consent of her brother. Ideally, it is a woman's brother who gives the consent, and if one asks a Yao how he gets married to any particular woman he will answer immediately, 'You go to ask her brother.' When consent has been obtained the woman's brother seeks out the man's brother and formally meets him, thereby setting the public seal on the relationships between the man and the woman. This gives the husband particular rights over his wife and her activities. After this, the difficulties of any of the marriage partners are the concern of the two sponsoring relatives (*acinamangoswe*) whom I have called 'marriage sureties'. They meet to discuss the illnesses of either of the marriage partners or their children and try to settle the differences that arise in the married life of their wards. They must be consulted before the marriage can end, and in fact they perform the act that ends the marriage, i.e. one pays a nominal sum of say 2*s.* to the other.

According to the Yao, women are quite helpless in their relationships with others, in illness or in any court cases, and must always have a man to look after them. They are seen to be as dependent on him as children are upon their parents. A statement made to me by old Naliwa, a man who has been looking after a sorority-group for years, reflects this attitude of the men towards the women in their care.

> These dependent women (*mbumba*) are as annoying as children to look after. They are *miseci* [1] indeed. If a child is ill they go to tell their brother who says, 'Very well, I shall come to see the child.' If he is not very quick to do it they are likely to be backbiting. If he finds the child very ill he goes to tell the marriage sureties of its father, and they go to a diviner to look for medicine for the sick child. Then the sisters say that he is a good man because he gets on with the job when a person is ill.
>
> Soon the child's mother becomes ill. Someone goes to tell her brother who says that he will come to see her. He visits her husband's

[1] Backbiting. See Chap. VI, pp. 137–8.

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562 578 593 marriage surety and together they consult diviners and find medicine until she recovers. Then he goes back to his village.

He has no sooner got back when someone comes along to tell him that the child is ill again. He says, 'I am busy, I have some work to do. Tell someone else to go to the diviner.' The messenger goes back to his sisters and they say to each other: 'He is not a good man. He refuses to go to the diviner for the child.' Another says, 'Yes, it is so. Our brother is not diligent and when he comes here he will get no food from us. He eats our food but he does not work for us. Let us ask someone else to look after us. Our younger brother is a good man indeed.' Then everyone agrees that this should be so. The one that all said was a good man before, they all now say is bad. Then the sisters go along to tell the other brother who says, 'Go and tell my elder brother.' The sisters reply that he is not a good man and say, 'We want you to look after us.' He agrees and goes to the diviner to get medicine.

The next morning a husband goes off to his village without saying goodbye.[1] The wife now goes along to tell her younger brother who says that he can do nothing about it and that she will have to tell her older brother. She returns to her village crying, and tells her sisters that she told her brother about her husband's leaving and that he refused to have anything to do with it. Then one of the sisters says, 'Yes, the older one is a good man, not like that bad young one. If this one were the older one he would have already gone to get the man back.' Others say, 'Yes, that young one is not good at all. He is a sulky one. Is he not a sorcerer? Go to the big one and tell him.'

Then the woman goes to the hut of the older brother and tells him of her difficulties. He tells her to go and fetch her husband and if he refuses to come back, to tell him. This she does and he refuses to return. She reports this to his elder brother. He tells her that his younger brother will return and if he does not they will come to talk matters over. The woman goes back to her village and goes to see her elder brother to tell him what she has done. He says, 'Very well, my sister, if he does not come to-day I shall go there to-morrow. Now go home and give the children some food.' When she gets back to the village she says, 'That brother is a good one indeed. He is diligent. He is going to fetch my husband back, if he does not return to-day.' If the man has not come by the next morning the woman goes to tell her brother. He goes to the husband's

[1] *Kuunduka*—to go off in a huff, to go off without saying goodbye. This is a sure sign that there is something wrong and that some action needs to be taken.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

village and seeks out his marriage surety. They call him and tell him that the woman's brother has come to take him back to the village. He says that it is all right and that he will follow that evening. The brother goes back and tells his sister to cook porridge because her husband will be coming that evening, and then he goes home. The husband returns.

The woman now goes to tell her brother that her husband has returned and he says that he will come to visit him in the morning. Next morning her brother comes to the hut and asks her husband why he had left. 'You were cross about something and you did not come to tell me. Now tell me why you left.' The husband now tells him and they talk it over. If they fail to reach an understanding they go to tell the husband's sureties and discuss the case fully. If the woman is wrong her brother reprimands her and if the man is wrong his sureties reprimand him.

To live with a sorority-group needs courage.[1] You must not listen to backbiting. If you listen to the tales of others then you will not be able to live with your sorority-group because your heart has no fierceness. A sorority-group needs a man who has no fear. Then the women listen to what he says. He will say to his sister, 'Sister, hoe your gardens well. Do not have intercourse in the bush because it will finish your children with salt.[2] You must respect your husband and not tell him lies because he will not trust you and will be frightened of you. Listen to what I tell you. Things will be peaceful in your house if you come to tell us what is going on. If you do not tell us then there will be lots of friction.' Then the people say about a man whose sisters are not very happy, 'Who is that man who is not teaching[3] his sorority-group well?' Then the people will mention his name and they will laugh at him. If the sorority-group are living happily together he is a good man and he does not listen to the backbiting. His sorority-group are obeying him well and he lives happily with them.

In this account one cannot but be struck by the ambivalence of the relationship of brothers and sisters. Now they hate each other and now they love each other, depending largely on the fortunes of the moment. But the tie is the strongest in Yao social structure; while the relationships between the sorority-group and any particular brother may vary, the relationship between brothers and sisters in general is unassailable. When

[1] *Wakulimbika ntima*; perhaps more literally translated as 'a stout heart'.
[2] A reference to *ndaka*. See Chap. V, p. 112.
[3] In the sense of teaching them the right way to live, as their mentor.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

While the succession rule may indicate someone as having the
613 best claim to a headmanship or chieftainship, it does not ensure
622 that he will succeed. Succession to headmanship is not merely
562 a matter of assuming control over the matrilineal relatives of the
● headman. It is also taking command of the whole village as an entity in a political structure and keeping it together as a functioning whole. The village as a whole, as well as the perpetual senior relatives, has a say in the selection of the new headman, and they select the man who is likely to be the most suitable for the position. Here, as in most affairs, the women have an important say. When they consider his suit the village members discuss in particular the ability of the prospective headman to hold the village together. If he is unsuitable they may cite occasions when he is believed to have used sorcery, or sometimes they merely say that he ' has no mouth '. This means that he is incapable of settling the disputes which arise in the village and therefore is unable to keep peace within it. The attitudes of the villagers to suitors for a name are well brought out in the statements when the Misi name was considered.

There were two uterine nephews, Wadi and Mbulaje, whose claims were about equal though Wadi was the elder. The chief Kawinga sent his representative Kasonga to call for a decision. At a general meeting he asked the villagers whom they wanted. Typically Kasonga's remarks were addressed particularly to the women. There was a division of loyalties. Some said that they wanted Mbulaje because ' he was of good heart, he gave gifts, he laughed and was not bad tempered, and he looked after the people when they were ill '. Kasonga, however, asked the opinion of the women under Mbulaje, and they were apparently dissatisfied with him and supported his opponent. Kasonga therefore announced that the new headman would be Wadi. Mbulaje was dissatisfied with this decision and gathered about him his followers and went off to found a village elsewhere. But the position for Wadi was an uneasy one. He lived in dread of Mbulaje's sorcery. When he was ill just before he died, he accused Mbulaje of putting poison in his beer. After he died Mbulaje brought back the women he had taken away and adopted the attire of the village headman. The people cynically accepted this, saying that he should perhaps take it because if any other should try to be headman he would not enjoy the fruits long before he too was killed. But the women were not satisfied with this arrangement and led by Cilo, the headman's sister's son, migrated. They said, ' We wonder that our chief should have died. The heart of the present chief is not good. Those who will stay with

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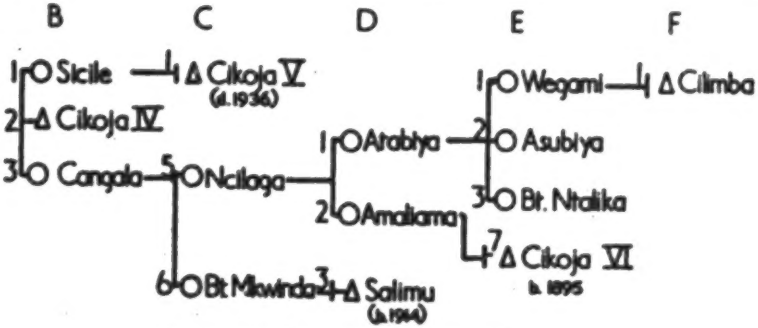
him will be other people, but for us the bush does not eat a person.' [1] Mbulaje was left with a few personal adherents. My informant assured me that ' He is a most unhappy man to-day because he is forever accused of being the sorcerer who is causing the deaths of his relatives. People are saying that Mbulaje had broken the village because he wanted to be a chief when the people did not want him. The one the people wanted was killed. Nowadays, no one visits him because of his sorcery and the people are frightened of him especially at beer drinks.'

Immaturity disqualifies many prospective village headmen. A headman must be a man of experience and wisdom to take charge of a village. Unfortunately I cannot present quantitative data on



REFERENCE GENEALOGY. CIKOJA VILLAGE.

the ages when village headmen succeeded to their title, but my impressions are that unless a man is older than about 30 years he will not be considered for the name. Difficulty arises when there is a conflict between the principles of seniority and age. The older women do not always bear sons before their younger sisters, so that sometimes a man from a junior lineage section (*liwelelyanandi*) may be older than a man from the senior. If the younger, but senior, is, say, over 35 it is likely that, other things being equal, he will take the name, but if not the man from the junior house stands the better chance. This is what has happened in Cikoja village. The position is as follows. When Cikoja IV (B2) died, quite regularly the elder sister's (B1) first-born son (C1) succeeded. But many years elapsed between the birth of

[1] *Litinji liyangalya mundu.* In other words, if we go to live in the bush somewhere Mbulaje will not bewitch us. Yao sorcerers are supposed to eat their victims. See p. 117, f.n. 1.

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622 the children of Ncilaga (C5) and Bt. Mkwinda (C6). There
613 was a big difference in the ages of these two women. Ncilaga
561 died nearly 30 years ago but Bt. Mkwinda died in 1948. When Cikoja V (C1) died in 1936, Salimu II (D3), who was born in about 1914, was very much younger than the present Cikoja VI (E7), who was born about 1895. Ncilaga (C5) had no sons, nor had Atabiya (D1), her eldest daughter, so the succession passed to the only son of Amaliama (D2) who was the senior male in that generation. Salimu II, genealogically senior to the present Cikoja, is to be the next headman. He has married a 'cross-cousin' (his mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter's daughter) and lives in the village. He has already taken over the affairs in one section of the village. The other section has moved out and built about half a mile away with the present Cikoja VI. Note that the junior house—i.e. the descendants of Citeleka (A2)—are completely out of the succession. Wegami's (E1) eldest son, Cilimba (F1), is living virilocally with Cikoja VI in his section of the village and is already opposed to the prospective village headman Salimu. He is likely to be the village headman after Salimu dies and may even push his claim when the present Cikoja VI dies, because Salimu has been accused of sorcery on several occasions.

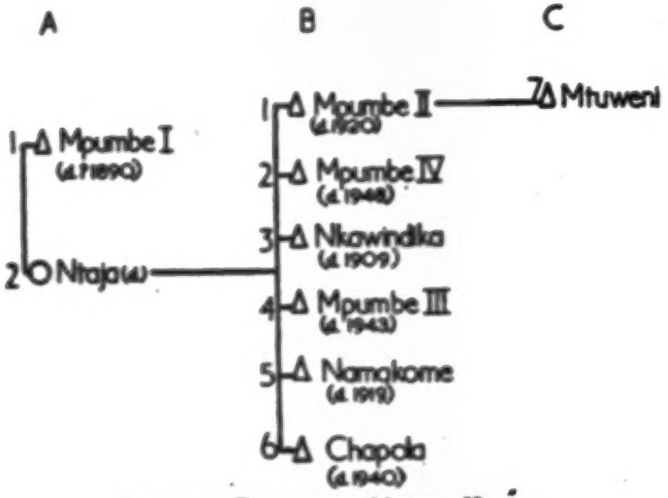
622 The conflict between sister's sons and mother's brothers at
578 successions has all but fallen away. The people oppose with
604 some vigour the idea that a younger brother should succeed. Frequently the chief or headman would rather his younger brother succeed, and sometimes indicates him as his successor. Kawinga, for example, has given his pre-succession name of Mlomba to his younger brother and many say this is tantamount to announcing Mlomba as the next Kawinga. This is violently repudiated by most people I have spoken to and they indicate a sister's son as the likely successor. Jalasi too, before he died in 1941, indicated Mbawa, his mother's younger sister's son as the successor, but when it came to the point a sister's son succeeded. The weight of custom is in favour of the sister's sons and usually the succession is fought out among uterine or collateral brothers in the first descending generation.

643 A matrilineal relative is always chosen to be chief in preference
562 to any other, but sometimes there is no heir. Other things being equal an unsuitable matrilineal relative will be chosen, or a

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

woman will take the position, before the name will be allowed to pass to a non-matrilineal relative. While a matrilineal relative holds it there is always the chance that a suitable matrilineal heir will be born to a woman of the matrilineage, and will be able to take over the name. In Katuli's area the principle of primogeniture is so strong, I was told that rather than let a succession pass to a junior house, a woman is appointed to ' keep the name '. This happened before the succession of the present Katuli. Nkolojele was the present Katuli's mother, and when his mother's brother died Katuli was too young to become the chief. Instead Nkolojele took the name to prevent it from going to a junior lineage and held it from 1920 to 1936. Nkolojele was thus appointed Principal Headman under the 1912 Ordinance. In 1936, she retired in favour of her son who then took the name Katuli and became chief.

The name is kept within the matrilineage if it is at all possible. The history of the succession of Mpumbe's name is instructive in this context.



REFERENCE GENEALOGY. MPUMBE VILLAGE.

Mpumbe, it will be remembered,[1] came from Jalasi's area to Kawinga's after the White attack on Jalasi in Mangoche. The genealogical summary sets out the relevant data.

[1] See p. 59.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

593 578 561 the identification of alternate generations; and this is particularly significant when we realize that the tension between the filial and parental generations is most likely to find expression in the situation where a group of young adult women wish to leave a village, and their mother, if she is still alive, must make up her mind whether to stay or to follow them.

562 613 561 The existence of rules of succession for men, different from those for women, presents an interesting analytical problem which I have not yet fully explored. Clearly men must succeed to positions in the first ascending generation, for they are the active leaders in Yao society and those who are to succeed must be sufficiently mature to take over the responsibilities of leadership. Women, on the other hand, are usually not leaders so that succession to positions in the second ascending generation involves no difficulties. A young woman may take her mother's mother's name without involving any responsibilities of leadership. Yet the interaction of the two systems of succession presumably has some reaction on the social structure. A man's sister's daughter who succeeds to her mother's mother's position becomes the man's mother and the man's mother's brother's sister. The man's own sister becomes his mother's brother's mother.[1] The effect of this presumably is to achieve some balance of power between a man and his mother's brother. By the rule of succession for women, a man's sister to whom he is tied by the closest possible ties of kinship, and on whom he is dependent for political success, becomes his mother's brother's mother, so forming a common link between two potentially opposed persons. By the same reasoning a man's sister's daughter who is part of his sorority-group and who is likely to desert her mother's mother's brother to go with her mother's brother if there is a conflict, by succession becomes the sister of her mother's brother's mother's brother, so forming a unifying influence within the lineage. This problem emerged after my fieldwork was completed so that I have no evidence to support these suggestions.

613 561 582 Among the men, because of the struggle for political power, the opposition of alternate generations is much stronger than among women. This emerges most clearly in the institution of marriage sureties.

The duties of the marriage sureties towards their wards are

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Gluckman who pointed this out to me.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

him. The woman in the meantime had run to Chiwalo's hut half a mile away. Here she complained to the chief that Mwanace wanted to kill her. Chiwalo refused to listen to her complaint and sent for Ali Kasunka. When he had come and explained the sequence of events, he continued saying that he would like to take the case to court. Chiwalo, who was Ali Kasunka's wife's father's sister's son (hence a classificatory younger brother) and whose henchman Ali Kasunka was, refused to arbitrate in the case but referred it to Kawinga. On the day of the case the woman's husband came back from the Army. The case was tried and eventually the court assessors awarded a damages claim of £3 to be paid by Mwanace to his sister. The husband, at the same time, said that he could not remain married to her because whenever he saw her he would think that she had slept with her brother and in court he gave Ali Kasunka a marriage termination payment. The tension between Ali Kasunka and his 'sister's son' did not end there however. When they got back to the village Ali Kasunka remonstrated with Mwanace saying, 'Are you not ashamed to have married your sister?' Mwanace said that he could not stand that sort of thing and went back to live uxorilocally.

A crucial point in this case history is that the women did not like Mwanace. Almost certainly there would have been a split in the village had the women had more confidence in Mwanace. The tension between Ali Kasunka and Mwanace, although the conflict is inter-generational, started, as it consistently does, from the relationships of a man to the women of his matrilineage. Without the support of the women, younger brothers or sister's sons are impotent against the power of their senior relatives. It is only when they can induce the women to follow them and to leave their rivals that they can found a new village and thereby begin to earn prestige. Therefore, although the men are the active agents in bringing about a physical act of fission, they are in fact only making manifest a situation which is latent within the lineage.

The position of the senior male matrilineal relative is of fundamental importance in questions involving segmentation. His position is seen most clearly in the dominant matrilineage, in which the name of the village is inherited. The Yao practise 'positional succession'. A man not only succeeds to his mother's brother's name but also to the position of the mother's brother in the social structure as a whole.[1] It follows that when the

[1] See Chap. V, p. 121.

4: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7 Marevi FR4

case mwavi might be administered; if adjudged guilty the accused would be burned on a pile of wood.

Evidence is given without taking any oath; a false witness is not punished.

Justice is occasionally summary. At Mponda's, after conviction of adultery with one of the chief's wives, a man's throat was cut on the spot. Drowning was the usual punishment with Mponda.

Punishments for all offences practically meant payment.

Customs, Salutations, etc.

The correct salutation among Machinga Yao and Mañanja on meeting is clapping the hands, the hands in front of and at right angles to the body parallel to each other, thumbs against the fingers. The clapping should be continued for ten minutes after having passed; after passing a chief it should be continued for half-an-hour.

Another form consists in slowly beating the breast with the right hand, the head slightly inclined forward. The lower in station makes salutation first to the higher, a man to a chief, a woman to a man; exception is made in the case of an old woman, who is saluted by the man. Scattered all over the country a raising of one or both arms is a common form of salutation, but is probably only a corruption of the military salute.

Slapping of the nates or thigh with the right hand is also seen, among old men usually. In imploring mercy from, or on the first occasion of meeting, the chief, a man lies prone on the ground and catching the foot of the chief, puts it on his neck—a sign of absolute submission. Women kneel at the approach of a man. Words and expressions of salutation are few—*Mapo* (=heart) being the only old expression used. Now commonly one hears a word (sounding like *sobwi*) probably a corruption of good morning, and the Swahili greeting *Salaleri* with the double hand-shake of Mohammedans.

A man returned to his village after an absence rests awhile, then his wife comes to him and kneeling greets him, *moyo*, her husband returning *moyo*.

Years ago, a man of any importance was received with firing of guns and shouting. A headman is received now with *Ntungulule*, the women wobbling their tongues in their mouths. Ashes are put on the head as a sign of *joy*.

In the morning the husband and wife do not greet each other, but in the village friends "give each other good morning" (=*Mapo*). On waking in the morning, a woman cracks all her joints (=*K'ulisa chala*). She then massages her husband and cracks the joints of his fingers.

One man wishing to see another goes to his house, and squatting outside the door cries "*Isho!*" three times (=there), at the same time clapping his hands. If no answer be given he goes away, even though he knows the man is within, no answer meaning that the inmate does not wish to be seen. If invited to enter he does so, the man of the house rises and gives him salutation. He makes small